

The Power of Film

Two Andrews student films win awards at SonScreen

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Stephen Allcock, Maxine Murray, and Jeriah Richardson pose with their trophy following the SonScreen awards where their film, "The Hugs Project," won Best Documentary Short. (Photo by Michael Murray)

By: Konner Dent

On April 6–8, Loma Linda University hosted the annual [SonScreen Film Festival](#)—a student film competition sponsored by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Of the 44 total films that were entered into the festival, four were produced by Andrews University groups, two of which won awards.

[“The Hugs Project,”](#) produced by Stephen Allcock, Jeriah Richardson and Maxine Murray, won Best Documentary Short. Denae Keizs, Madai Villa, Heidi Ramirez and Kiana Gurley’s documentary “Foreign Native” gained an honorable mention in this category, and also won the Audience Choice Award. According to Paul Kim, associate professor of documentary film at Andrews University, this is the most important award at the festival.

Two additional projects from Andrews University that were screened during the event, but did not win awards, were “Papi” by Nina Vallado and “Jackie: The Transformation Project”

by University Health & Wellness. (The latter was screened as a professional film, not a student film, and was therefore ineligible for the competition.)

Aside from film screenings and award ceremonies, SonScreen also featured guest speakers including Bill Mechanic, producer of [“Hacksaw Ridge,”](#) and Terry Benedict, director of the Desmond Doss documentary [“The Conscientious Objector.”](#)

“SonScreen was a really great opportunity to see what other Christian schools were doing in film, and to network with fellow creatives,” states Allcock. “It was also absolutely fantastic to have such support from the Adventist church for filmmakers and creatives.”

Allcock recalls the experience of not only observing an audience experience their film for the first time, but also of being given an award for their work.

“I couldn't be happier about the award,” he says. “It was an amazing and challenging process for the whole film team, and to get such a fantastic reaction from the crowd as we witnessed them respond to the emotional rollercoaster of the story was amazing. To me, that was more satisfying than winning the award itself. That being said, it was a good feeling knowing people got as caught up in the story and characters of our documentary as we did. The award itself stands as a testament to the power of film to connect people and share stories.”

For more information about the documentary film program at Andrews University, visit the [Department of Visual Art, Communication & Design website](#), email paulkim@andrews.edu or call 269-471-6314.

Related Links

- [Trailer for "The Hugs Project"](#)
- [Sarah's Story of "The Hugs Project"](#)
- [Watch "Foreign Native"](#)
- [Watch "Papi"](#)
- [Trailer for "Jackie: The Transformation Project"](#)
- [Documentary Film at Andrews University](#)
- [Department of Visual Art, Communication & Design](#)

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